

4 September, 1981

MPY 0034

Memorandum for: Director, FBIS

Through : Chief, Operations Group

Subject : Paraguay Bureau Monthly Report--August 1981

### I. General

A. An article in the Brazilian news magazine VEJA stating Paraguayan President Stroessner was ill drew a round of denials in the country. According to VEJA, the 68-year-old president suffers from circulatory problems and difficulty using his right arm and hand. The foreign minister denied the claim to newsmen during his stay in Washington and on his return, and a popular newspaper carried a picture shortly after the original report showing General Stroessner winding up to deliver a right-handed pitch to open a local baseball game.

B. During the first part of the month the refusal by Paraguayan authorities to permit 1980 Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel of Argentina to enter the country caused a minor furor. Paraguay turned back the commercial flight with Perez aboard after having previously indicating he should not make the trip. This elicited a sharp protest from the Argentine Government as well as from the human rights group in Paraguay that had issued the original invitation.

### II. Operations

#### A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. The latest Bolivian coup began during the early hours of 3 August. Although the ruling strongman, General Garcia Meza, was forced to resign on the 4th, the coup activities lasted a total of five days, somewhat lengthy by Bolivian coup standards. Additional monitors were called in and a midnight shift instituted to give the bureau round-the-clock coverage. In addition to the government radios, the rebels set up a radio network of their own, effectively doubling the already increased broadcasts requiring coverage. Intermittent government jamming of the rebel network hampered the bureau's monitorial effort at times.

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Following the coup a message of appreciation was received from chief of operations for the "comprehensive and timely coverage" of Bolivian events.

2. Use of the twice weekly Montevideo-Asunción express bus to obtain Uruguayan papers procured by the Embassy there is showing promise. At month-s end a shipment was received containing some papers with only a 2-day lag. Bureau is continuing to watch this service to see if improvement in receipts will continue.

B. Communications

1. A planned [ ] outage for equipment maintenance on 12 August caused bureau's primary circuit to be inoperable for 3 hours 15 min. ST

2. A sudden atmospheric disturbance on 31 August blanked out most of bureau's voice coverage in HF band for 50 minutes.

C. Lateral Services

The Economic Attache at the American Embassy in Asunción requested an additional copy of the Latin America DAILY REPORT on a regular basis. The request was passed along to headquarters.

III. Administration

Personnel

1. Bureau deputy Chief [ ] and family arrived in Asunción on 20 August. ST

2. Editor [ ] was promoted to GS-10, effective 9 August. ST

3. Senior Editor [ ] briefed a group of newly arrived embassy officers and dependents on the bureau mission as part of a general post orientation program, on 24 August. ST

IV. Visits

Economic Attache James Reilly and Political officer Roger McGuire who arrived at post during the month were briefed at the bureau.

FBIS Regional Engineer [ ] arrived in Asunción on 14 August and departed on 27 August. ST  
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CC: Panama Bureau  
Operations Attachment  
Monthly Production Report  
Monitor ... production Report  
Engineering Attachment

[ ]  
Chief, FBIS Paraguay Bureau